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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AMGT](#) [HA](#) [PGOV](#) [AID](#)
EAID
SUBJECT: TFHA01: EMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE EARTHQUAKE SITREP as of 1800,
Day 15

¶1. (SBU) Summary: US and UN representatives continue to keep the Government of Haiti (GOH) apprised of coordinated relief efforts. President Preval publicly announced that he will not seek to extend his presidency beyond the scheduled end of his term. Despite significant personnel losses, the Haitian National Police and local banks slowly begin to resume business, and the GOH aims to meet payroll for all civil servants with its own funds for now. End summary.

RELIEF COORDINATION UPDATE PRESENTED TO GOH

¶2. (SBU) On January 27, Ambassador Merten, JTF Commander LTG Keen, Unified Relief Coordinator Ambassador Lewis Lucke, and acting UN Special Representative Tony Banbury met to brief President Preval and PM Bellerive on progress of JTF and UN efforts to provide food and shelter. The goal was to provide relief supply info to the GOH that was reliable, explain the plans for future supply efforts (food surge), explain plans to repair the damaged seaport, and demonstrate an integrated UN/US effort. President Preval approved dividing the airport landing slots by category of organization. He asked repeatedly about tent supplies, saying explicitly that he has no confidence in the NGO and UN numbers, and by implication, no confidence in their capacity to deliver. He also raised again bringing in prefab school rooms from Broward County with JTF assistance. He agreed to regular joint UN/US coordination briefings and proposed once a week for 3-4 weeks, and once a month thereafter. The UN and US representatives held a joint press conference with the Prime Minister outside the GOH building after the meeting. Preval came out of the building halfway through the formal press conference and met the local press off to one side for the first interview he has given to the local press since the earthquake.

PREVAL SAYS WILL NOT EXTEND MANDATE

¶3. (SBU) Speaking on local radio on January 28 for the first time since the earthquake, President Preval said that he had no intention to remain as president after the end of his term in February 2011. He did not specify, however, when parliamentary and presidential elections would be held. Meanwhile, there are increasing reports of small demonstrations against Preval and in support of the US presence in Haiti, including motorcycle taxis carrying US flags in the southern city of Les Cayes.

NATIONAL POLICE AND GOH PAYROLL

¶4. (SBU) Mario Andresol, Director General of the Haitian National Police, announced that seventy police officers died in the earthquake, and 491 remain missing. The Police continue to return to the streets of the capital, directing traffic. Meanwhile, according to Canadian Embassy contacts, verbal orders were allegedly given by police leadership to shoot escaped prisoners on sight. United Nations Civilian Police officers close to prison authorities reported hearing unconfirmed reports of instances of extra-judicial killings of presumed criminals by the police.

¶5. (SBU) The new MINUSTAH Police Commissioner, General Chaumont, met with Prime Minister Bellerive on January 27 and confirmed that the GOH will meet its January payroll, including for the police. According to Bellerive, the payment checks are currently being printed, and he does not foresee major difficulties. According to police sources, paychecks were supposed to be delivered today, but have not arrived.

¶6. (SBU) The Governor and Chief Internal Auditor of the Central Bank have both repeatedly reassured EmbOff that re-establishing payroll for civil servants remains a priority and is currently within the means of GOH reserves. The Central Bank has also offered the use of its armored vehicles to transport funds between bank branches.

FINANCIAL SERVICES ATTEMPT TO REGAIN FOOTING

¶5. (SBU) Maxime Charles, President of the Haitian Bankers' Association told EmbOffs on January 27 that the Central Bank, with the help of MINUSTAH, is supplying funds to bank branches in provinces. According to Charles, about 20 bank branches in Port-au-Prince were destroyed or are not functional; however, other sources estimate the number at more than 30. Charles noted the importance of negotiating a loan guarantee fund with local banks to absorb collateral and reserve requirements. The exchange rate for USD is stable at purchase price of HTG 39 to USD 1, and sale price of HTG 41.50 to USD 1. Commercial banks are conducting foreign exchange transactions, but in small amounts. Money transfer houses are functioning, with long lines of customers, but less than in previous days. C.A.M. Transfer, one of the largest local transfer houses, has provided funds for five branches in Port-au-Prince, and has resumed regular business hours.

GOH COUNTS PERSONNEL LOSSES

¶6. (SBU) According to the World Bank, human capacity within the GOH, including the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank, has suffered particularly at the mid- and senior-managerial levels, due to deaths and absences since the earthquake. As staff within the GOH and the banking sector continue to leave the country, banks are not operating at capacity. In cases where computer records have not been destroyed, information, including tax information and records, will not be retrievable from servers for weeks, if at all.

MERTEN